

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 3: Intake	Effective Date: July 1, 2008
	Section 4: Initial Evaluation of CA/N Intake Reports	Version: 3

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will evaluate every child abuse/neglect (CA/N) intake report it receives and make determinations about:

1. Whether or not the allegations meet the statutory definition of CA/N and should therefore be assigned for assessment; and
2. Whether or not the report contains enough information to identify or locate the child and initiate an assessment; and
3. How quickly the assessment must be initiated.

The intake worker will relay the CA/N intake information to the intake supervisor for review. The intake supervisor will review the intake as soon as practical, not to exceed **24 hours** of the conclusion of the initial call from the reporter. Supervisory review may only be bypassed if and only if a one-hour response time is required and a supervisor is not immediately available. See separate policy [3.5 Supervisory Review of CA/N Intake Reports](#).

DCS will immediately assign all intakes involving a child who voluntarily enters an emergency shelter or a shelter care facility, without the presence or consent of a parent, guardian or custodian.

Note: Per IC 31-36-3, DCS must conduct an assessment concerning the child no later than **forty-eight (48) hours** after receiving notification from the emergency shelter or shelter care facility.

DCS will recontact the reporter if more information or clarifications are needed to make a determination about the appropriate DCS response to the report.

DCS will not contact any other persons or consult any non-DCS records or databases to gather information about any subjects in the report prior to assigning the report for assessment.

Code References

1. [IC 31-9-2: Family Law and Juvenile Law, Definitions](#)
2. [IC 31-34-1: Juvenile Law, Child in Need of Services](#)
3. [IC 31-36-3: Homeless Children](#)

PROCEDURE

The intake worker will complete the following at the conclusion of the reporter's initial call:

1. If time allows, conduct a search of current and historical DCS records (Child Welfare Information Services (ICWIS) and Indiana Client Eligibility System (ICES)) and summarize any findings in the allegations section of the CA/N intake report. Note: This step may be completed by clerical staff.

2. Review the intake report and the information gained from the DCS records search.
3. Re-contact the reporter to expand upon or clarify information in the CA/N intake report only if necessary to determine the appropriate DCS action.
4. Assign all intake reports involving a homeless unaccompanied minor receiving shelter without the presence or consent of a parent, guardian or custodian made by an emergency shelter, a shelter care facility, or a program that provides shelter to homeless individual.
5. Determine if the allegations meet the statutory definition of CA/N. See separate policy, [3.8 Statutory Definition of CA/N](#).
6. Complete the following if he/she determines the statutory definition of CA/N **has** been met:
 - a. Recommend that the report be assigned for assessment.
 - b. Recommend how quickly the assessment must be initiated. See separate policy, [3.9 Initiation Times for Assessment](#).

Note: When using ICWIS, review the timeframe assigned by ICWIS and make any appropriate overrides.

- c. Follow any additional procedures for special intakes. See separate policies: [3.10 Institutional CA/N Intake Reports](#), [3.11 Transferring Intercounty CA/N Reports](#), [Intentional False Reporting](#), and [4.29 Joint Assessments](#).
 - d. Recommend appropriate links to any assessments, open 30 days or less, involving the same alleged perpetrator, alleged victim and same/similar allegations. See separate policy, [3.12 Linking CA/N Reports to Open Assessments](#).
7. Recommend the report for screen-out if he/she determines the statutory definition of CA/N **has not** been met. See separate policy, [3.6 Recommending CA/N Reports for Screen-Out](#).
8. Forward the intake report to the intake supervisor. This may be done electronically or in hard copy, or if necessary due to time constraints, by reading the information over the phone.
 - a. An intake worker **may** bypass supervisory review and assign the case to a Family Case Manager (FCM) for assessment if a one-hour response time is required and the supervisor is not immediately available. The intake worker should make contact with the supervisor as soon as possible after assigning the case and share the details of the report with the supervisor.
 - b. An intake worker **may not** bypass supervisory review on any reports he/she recommends for screen-out.
9. Confirm receipt of the report unless supervisory review was bypassed. Ideally, this will be done by making direct contact with the supervisor either in-person or via phone. In situations where this is not practical, ensure receipt through a standardized delivery process such as a high-priority in-box, an incoming intake report log, etc.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Records Searches

ICWIS and ICES databases may reveal pertinent information about the subjects of a CA/N report. The worker should examine all information for “red flags” that would cause a reasonable person to have concerns for the child’s safety and well-being or worker safety.

Pertinent facts should be briefly summarized in the allegations section of the intake report, such as dates and dispositions of previous DCS reports, assessments and cases.

Confirming Supervisory Receipt of Intake Reports

Whenever possible, it is good practice for the intake worker to get actual confirmation (e.g., in person acknowledgement, a phone conversation, or a reply e-mail) of receipt of an intake report. This is particularly important when an assessment must be initiated within one hour. By getting a confirmation, the intake worker can assure that the assessment will be assigned and initiated within the appropriate time frames. When a confirmation is not practical, a standardized delivery process should be used such as a high-priority in-box, an incoming intake report log, etc.

Reports with no allegation of abuse or neglect

If the report regarding an unaccompanied homeless child is made by an emergency shelter, a shelter care facility, or a program that provides shelter to homeless individuals, the report must be assigned. Assessment of all intake reports of this nature **must** be conducted within **48 hours** of receiving notification from the emergency shelter or shelter care facility, even if abuse or neglect is not alleged.

Homeless Unaccompanied Minor

A homeless unaccompanied minor is an individual who is under the age of eighteen (18) and is receiving shelter without a parent/guardian/custodian present.

Emancipated Minors

Shelters are not required to report providing shelter to emancipated minors to DCS. Reports for emancipated minors will not be recommended for assessment.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. CA/N Intake Report (310) – available in ICWIS
2. [Intake Decision Tree](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Allegations that Occurred in the Past

DCS reserves the right to **assess** allegations of CA/N, no matter how long ago the alleged incidents occurred. This is despite the statute of limitation relative to child abuse and neglect ([IC 35-41-4-2 Periods of Limitation](#)), which sets forth the time limits for the **prosecution** of CA/N. The offenses listed in the child in need of services (CHINS) definitions are either felonies or misdemeanors and are subject to the statute of limitation, after which time prosecution is barred. A Class B, Class C or Class D felony cannot be prosecuted unless the prosecution is commenced within **five (5) years** after the commission of the offense; and the prosecution of a misdemeanor must be commenced within **two (2) years**. A prosecution for murder or a Class A felony may be commenced at any time. The time limit for certain sexual offences is extended, as detailed further in [IC 35-41-4-2](#).